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## THE RISE OF THE HERO CULT AND THE NEW SIMONIDES

The publication of the new Simonides has once again raised the problem of heroization at Plataea.<sup>1</sup> In the discussions of the text the terms 'heroization' and 'hero cult' are often employed rather loosely, as they usually are in literary and archaeological discussions of hero cult in general. It seems therefore useful to look in detail at the problem as to when we can speak, *sensu stricto*, of 'hero cult'. Having considered this problem, we will focus on the new Simonides in order to see whether it is justified to speak of heroization in this particular case.

### 1. *The rise of the hero cult*

As a point of departure for my investigation into the origin of the hero cult, I have chosen the discussions in the handbooks of Nilsson and Burkert, and the recent lemma 'Heroen' in *Der Neue Pauly*. The first is, basically, the product of the thinking of the first half of the twentieth century,<sup>2</sup> the second exemplifies the turn towards structuralism and functionalism of the late 1960s and 1970s, and the third may be expected to reflect the current position.

Nilsson (1874-1967) published the first edition of his still useful handbook

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<sup>1</sup> This is the annotated version of a lecture given in Paris on May 17, 2006. A shorter version was part of my lecture 'Divinisation, Heroization and the Afterlife: Three Snapshots' at the Second Biennial Graduate Conference, Harvard, Classics Department, 17 April 2004. For information and comments I thank the audiences, Annemarie Ambühl, Claude Calame, Bob Fowler, Rudolf Kassel, Robert Parker and François de Polignac.

<sup>2</sup> For the late nineteenth century we now have the splendid analysis of Jacob Burckhardt's 'Der griechische Heroencultus' in *Jacob Burckhardt Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Band 20: Griechische Culturgeschichte. Band II* (Munich and Basel, 2005) 207-52.

in 1941 and later editions have been updated only, not essentially changed.<sup>3</sup> The contemporary reader will immediately notice that the heroes are not discussed straight after the gods, where we would expect them, but are treated in the first part: the foundations of Greek religion ('Die Grundlagen der griechischen Religion'). That is because early twentieth-century anthropologists and historians of religion, in the wake of E.B. Tylor (1844-1917), considered the belief in the soul and the cult of the dead a, if not *the*, origin of religion.<sup>4</sup> It is therefore not surprising that Nilsson saw the 'real and original' ('wirklichen und ursprünglichen') heroes primarily as humans that have died. Moreover, thus still Nilsson, this was a tradition reaching back into prehistory, although the actual heroic cult originated in the funerary cult of the Mycenaean era and, in historical times, was sharply distinguished from the cult of the gods.

It is not difficult to see that Nilsson did not produce any proof at all for the existence of the hero cult in prehistory. In fact, the most recent study of the sacrificial ritual of hero cults points out that the ritual does not support the idea of an origin of hero cults in the cult of the dead. Similarly, recent studies have demonstrated that the idea of a strong demarcation between hero and divine cults is an *idée fixe*, which has its roots in the systematising efforts of Late

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<sup>3</sup> M.P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* I (Munich, 1941<sup>1</sup>, 1955<sup>2</sup>, 1967<sup>3</sup>) 184-91 (1955<sup>2</sup>, 1967<sup>3</sup>). For Nilsson see E. Gjerstad *et al.*, *Martin P. Nilsson in memoriam: a complete bibliography* (Lund, 1968); W.W. Briggs and W.M. Calder III (eds), *Classical Scholarship: A Biographical Encyclopedia* (New York, 1990) 335-40 (J. Mejer); A. Bierl and W.M. Calder, 'Instinct against proof: the correspondence between Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and Martin P. Nilsson on Religionsgeschichte (1920-1930)', *Eranos* 89 (1991) 73-99, repr. in W.M. Calder III, *Further Letters of Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff* (Hildesheim, 1994) 151-78.

<sup>4</sup> But note the protest of Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* I, 185. For Tylor see most recently A. Ciattini, *L'animismo di Edward Burnett Tylor* (Turin, 1995); G. Stocking, *Delimiting Anthropology* (Madison, 2001) 103-46; H. Kippenberg, *Discovering Religious History in the Modern Age* (Princeton, 2002) 51-64.

Antiquity when, it should be stressed, the cult of heroes seems to have witnessed a certain expansion.<sup>5</sup>

Unlike Nilsson, Burkert discusses the heroes immediately after the gods, but he prefixes his analysis with sections on the burial and cult of the dead and on afterlife mythology.<sup>6</sup> In other words, the traditional ideas still exert a strong influence on him. Burkert derives the worship of heroes from the 'influence of the then flourishing epic poetry' in the eighth century and later.<sup>7</sup> This is one more variation of an idea first floated by Lewis Farnell (1856-1934) in his 1921 study of the heroes,<sup>8</sup> although Jacob Burckhardt (1818-1897) too had already seen the importance of 'der epische Gesang' in this respect;<sup>9</sup> the idea has remained popular until the present day in slightly different variations.<sup>10</sup> In his handbook Burkert adduces as examples of an early cult of epic heroes and heroines Agamemnon, Helen and Menelaos, and the Seven against Thebes in Eleusis,

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<sup>5</sup> R. Hägg (ed.), *Ancient Greek Hero Cult* (Stockholm, 1999); G. Ekroth, *The Sacrificial Rituals of Greek Hero-Cults* (Liège, 2002); R. Hägg (ed.), *Greek sacrificial ritual, Olympian and chthonian* (Stockholm, 2005). Expansion: G. Ekroth, 'Pausanias and the Sacrificial Rituals of Greek Hero-Cults', in Hägg, *Ancient Greek Hero Cult*, 145-58.

<sup>6</sup> W. Burkert, *Greek Religion*, tr. J. Raffan (Oxford, 1985) 203-11 (*Griechische Religion der archaischen und klassischen Epoche*, Stuttgart 1977, 312-19). For Burkert (1931-) see L.J. Alderink, 'Greek Ritual and Mythology: The Work of Walter Burkert', *Rel. Stud. Review* 6 (1980) 1-13; W. Burkert, 'Burkert über Burkert', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 3.8.1988, 29-30; R.W. Cape, 'An Interview with Walter Burkert', *Favonius* 2 (1988) 41-52; L.J. Alderink, 'Walter Burkert and a Natural Theory of Religion', *Religion* 30 (2000) 211-27.

<sup>7</sup> Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 204.

<sup>8</sup> L.R. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality* (Oxford, 1921) 284-342. For Farnell see J. Henderson, 'Farnell's Cults. The Making and Breaking of Pausanias in Victorian Archaeology and Anthropology', in S. Alcock *et al.* (eds), *Pausanias. Travel and Memory in Roman Greece* (Oxford, 2001) 207-23.

<sup>9</sup> Burckhardt, 'Der griechische Heroencultus', 211.

<sup>10</sup> J.N. Coldstream, 'Hero-Cults in the Age of Homer', *JHS* 96 (1976) 8-17; E. Rupp, 'The "Royal Tombs" at Salamis (Cyprus): Ideological Messages of Power and Authority', *J. Mediterr. Arch.* 1 (1988) 111-39.

whereas in a later discussion he mentions Agamemnon, Helen and Odysseus, if with the *caveat*: ‘confirmation comes from later inscriptions’.<sup>11</sup> However, Agamemnon’s sanctuary at Mycenae lacks a tomb and is only attested by fourth-century inscriptions, and even that evidence is not beyond any doubt.<sup>12</sup> Doubt turns to scepticism when we remind ourselves that it were the descendants of Perseus not Agamemnon who dominated local Mycenaean tradition.<sup>13</sup> The Spartan sanctuary of Menelaos seems to have been Helen’s at first, as she alone is mentioned in the oldest inscriptions, whereas in his own right Menelaos appears in an inscription only *ca.* 500 BC; in no case is there a tomb.<sup>14</sup> The Seven are not mentioned in Eleusis before the Christian era, although in their neighbourhood tombs are well attested;<sup>15</sup> an early worship is the less convincing, as pictorial

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<sup>11</sup> W. Burkert, *Kleine Schriften I: Homérica* (Göttingen, 2001) 15-6 (Agamemnon, Helen, Odysseus: 1992<sup>1</sup>) 176 (Agamemnon: 1998<sup>1</sup>).

<sup>12</sup> See the most recent discussion of the relevant inscriptions and excavations by M. Piérart, “‘Argos assoiffée’ et ‘Argos riche en cavales’,” in his (ed.), *Polydipsion Argos* (Paris, 1992) 119-55 at 131-2; S. Alcock, ‘The Heroic Past in a Hellenistic Present’, in P. Cartledge *et al.* (eds), *Hellenistic Constructs* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1997) 20-34 at 23-5; J. Hall, ‘Beyond the *Polis*: the Multilocality of Heroes’ in Hägg, *Ancient Greek Hero Cult*, 49-59 at 55-59; I. Ratinaud-Lachkar, ‘Héros homériques et sanctuaires d’époque géométrique’, in V. Pirenne-Delforge and E. Suárez de la Torre (eds), *Héros et héroïnes dans les mythes et les cultes grecs*, Suppl. *Kernos* 10 (Liège, 2000) 247-62 at 254-7 (no tomb); D. Boehringer, *Heroenkulte in Griechenland von der geometrischen bis zur klassischen Zeit* (Berlin, 2001) 173-8.

<sup>13</sup> As is noted by Burkert, *Kleine Schriften I*, 177; for Perseus in Mycenae see also M. Jameson, ‘Perseus, the Hero of Mykenai’, in R. Hägg and G. Nordquist (eds), *Celebrations of Death and Divinity in the Bronze Age Argolid* (Stockholm, 1990) 213-30.

<sup>14</sup> SEG 26.457-8 (Helen), 459 (Menelaos); Isoc. 10.63 (Helen and Menelaos worshipped ‘as gods’); Alcock, ‘The Heroic Past’, 25; Ratinaud-Lachkar, ‘Héros homériques’, 250-3 (archaeological discussion); C. Antonaccio, ‘Dedications and the character of the cult’, in Hägg, *Greek Sacrificial Ritual*, 99-112.

<sup>15</sup> Plut. *Thes.* 29; Paus. 1.39.2. For discussion see R. Parker, *Athenian Religion* (Oxford, 1996) 35-6; C. Antonaccio, *The Archaeology of Ancestors* (Lanham, 1995) 112-14; E. Kearns, *The Heroes of Attica* (London, 1989) 130-1; Boehringer, *Heroenkulte in Griechenland*, 63-4; B. Currie, *Pindar and the Cult of Heroes* (Oxford, 2005) 47-59.

representations of the Theban cycle do not appear before 600 BC.<sup>16</sup> Finally, the presence of Odysseus in the Ithacan cave is not confirmed by an inscription before the Hellenistic period and even extremely unlikely before that period, given the odd nature of the deposits.<sup>17</sup> We conclude that the influence of the epic tradition on the birth of the hero cult is not demonstrated by Burkert's examples. That does not mean to say that epic cannot have had an influence, and we will come back to that problem momentarily.

Fritz Graf proceeds in a different way and starts his lemma 'Heroen' with the myths of Homer and Hesiod, but basically he accepts the model that associates the beginning of hero cult in the eighth century with the epic heroes as human actors with their own biography and grave.<sup>18</sup> The cult of the epic heroes was followed by the practice of Greek *poleis* to invent a heroic ancestor for themselves or their parts (Athenian *phylae*, for example). It is a sign of our changing times that Graf also mentions heroines, but these are, I regret to say, clearly less important.<sup>19</sup> The cult of the heroes is often similar to that of the gods, but it also displays aspects connected with funeral cult or with social activities like banquets.

When we look at these and other recent discussions,<sup>20</sup> it soon becomes clear that they all operate with insufficient attention to an important

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<sup>16</sup> Burkert, *Kleine Schriften* I, 154.

<sup>17</sup> Alcock, 'The Heroic Past', 25; Ratinand-Lachkar, 'Héros homériques', 257-62.

<sup>18</sup> F. Graf, 'Heroenkult', *Der Neue Pauly* 5 (1998) 476-80.

<sup>19</sup> See J. Larson, *Greek Heroine Cults* (Madison, 1995); D. Lyons, *Gender and Immortality. Heroines in Ancient Greek Myth and Cult* (Princeton, 1997); Pirenne-Delforge and Suárez de la Torre, *Héros et héroïnes dans les mythes et les cultes grecs*.

<sup>20</sup> Kearns, *Heroes of Attica*, 1-9; J. Whitley, 'Tomb Cult and Hero Cult: The Uses of the Past in Archaic Greece', in N. Spencer (ed.), *Time, Tradition and Society in Greek Archaeology* (London and New York, 1995) 43-63; Antonaccio, *Archaeology of Ancestors*, 1-9; Boehringer, *Heroenkulte in Griechenland*, 25-46.

terminological question. Surely, we can speak of a hero cult only when there is a clear concept of heroes. In other words, it is impossible to speak of a hero cult in the eighth century if we cannot be sure that there was a category of heroes named and conceptualised in opposition to the category of the gods. This, as we know, is not the case. Homer nowhere explicitly mentions a class of 'heroes' as cult figures between humans and divinities. Admittedly, Graf notes this absence and considers it due to 'epische Stilisierung',<sup>21</sup> but that is begging the question. Although the etymology of ἥρως is still disputed, the truth is that in Homer the word can be best translated as 'lord' and seen 'as in origin a title of respect, capable of both non-religious and religious applications'. It would then be comparable to  $\square$ ναξ, δεσπότης (δέσποινα) and πότνια, which are all equally 'capable of both non-religious and religious applications'.<sup>22</sup> It is consistent with this origin as a title that it is frequently used as a term of address, sometimes even with the addition of a personal name, like 'hero Eurypylos' or 'hero Telemachus'.<sup>23</sup> It would fit both the religious and the non-religious use that both meanings of ἥρως apparently already occur in Mycenaean Greek.<sup>24</sup>

Yet in Homer ἥρως nowhere comes even close to any hint of religious

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<sup>21</sup> Graf, 'Heroenkult', 477.

<sup>22</sup> For this meaning and a supposed pre-Greek background see C.J. Ruijgh, *Scripta minora* I (Amsterdam, 1991) 100, 558, overlooked by Currie, *Pindar*, 63 (quotes and older bibliography). M. Peters, 'Aus der Vergangenheit von Heroen und Ehegöttinnen', in M. Fritz and S. Zeilfelder (eds), *Novalis Indogermanica. Festschrift für Günther Neumann* (Graz, 2002) 357-80 at 357-68 pleads for an Indo-European etymology with the meaning 'young warrior'. For comparable Indo-European terms, like German *Held*, see G.-J. Pinault, 'Une nouvelle connexion entre le substrat indo-iranien et le tokharien commun', *Hist. Sprachf.* 116 (2003) 175-89.

<sup>23</sup> *Il.* XI.819, 838; *Od.* 4.312, cf. H. van Wees, 'From Kings to Demigods: Epic Heroes and Social Change, c. 750-600 BC', in S. Deger-Jalkotzy and I. Lemos (eds), *Ancient Greece* (Edinburgh, 2006) 363-79 at 368.

<sup>24</sup> Non-religious: KN Sc 244; KN Xd 116.6. Religious: PY Fr. 1204; Tn 316.5, cf. Currie,

significance or the cult of the dead,<sup>25</sup> and that is also the case for our other sources from the seventh and earlier sixth centuries,<sup>26</sup> such as the poor remnants of the Epic Cycle, which are commonly overlooked in this respect,<sup>27</sup> Hesiod (both canonical and spurious),<sup>28</sup> Theognis (711), Stesichorus (S137.3, S148.3 Davies) and Ibycus (S151.16, 19 Davies).<sup>29</sup> The same is still true for the whole of Bacchylides,<sup>30</sup> and for most of his slightly younger contemporary Pindar (but see below).<sup>31</sup> Given this situation, it seems that in the perhaps oldest extant Greek cult song, that of the women of Elis to Dionysos (*ca.* 6<sup>th</sup> century BC), the word ἥρωας in the invocation ἐλθεῖν, ἥρω Διόνυσσε also has the meaning ‘Lord’ rather than being, completely exceptionally, a fine theological distinction between Dionysos and the other gods.<sup>32</sup> The characterisation of Heracles as ἥρωας θεὸς in

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*Pindar*, 63f.

<sup>25</sup> As is stressed by M.L. West, *Hesiod, Works and Days* (Oxford, 1978) 370, in a valuable discussion of the word ἥρωας; similarly, *Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos*, s.v. ἥρωας (H.W. Nordheider); S. Saïd, ‘Tombes épiques d’Homère à Apollonios’, in S. Marchegay *et al.* (eds), *Nécropoles et pouvoirs. Idéologies, pratiques et interprétations* (Paris, 1998) 9-19; Currie, *Pindar*, 60.

<sup>26</sup> For a good survey see C. Barrigón, ‘La désignation des héros et héroïnes dans la poésie lyrique grecque’, in Pirenne-Delforge and Suárez de la Torre, *Héros et héroïnes*, 1-14. In the light of this evidence I find it hard to accept Asius 14.4 West<sup>2</sup> as deriving from the sixth century.

<sup>27</sup> *Thebais* F 2.1 D(avies) = B(ernabé), 4.1B; *Cypria* F 1.7D/B, 13.4D = 15.4B; *Ilias Parva* F 2<sup>A</sup> I.2D = 2.2B.

<sup>28</sup> Hesiod, *Th.* 970, 1009; *Op.* 159 (with West *ad loc.*; C. Calame, *Pratiques poétiques de la mémoire*, Paris 2006, 108-14), 172 (although Currie, *Pindar*, 64 considers a religious meaning possible, as he does in the case of *Op.* 159); *Sc.* 19, 37, 78, 118; F 10(a).44, 25.11, 37.5, 70.33, 193.13, 195.19 and 37, 200.9, 204.119, 257.4 M-W.

<sup>29</sup> Without context the word is also found in Tyrtaeus 17 West<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> Bacch. 5.71, 9.56, 11.81, 13.104, 15.37, 17.23, 47, 73, 94, F 20a.26 Maehler.

<sup>31</sup> Pind. *O.* 6.33, 8.42, 9.9 and 62, *P.* 2.31, 4.36, 199, 8.27, 51, 9.14a, 116, 11.7 (heroines!), 31, *N.* 5.7, 8.9, 9.10, 10.82 (hero explicitly called mortal!), *I.* 1.17, 5.26, 6.25, 28, 8.45, F 52g.13, 52h.9, 111a.7, 140a.74, 187.1 Maehler.

<sup>32</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 299B. For text, translation and commentary see now W.D. Furley and J.M.



Pindar's *Third Nemean Ode* (22) probably is another late example of this usage, as a distinction between gods and heroes or a combination of the two is not thematised at all in the poem.<sup>33</sup>

Our survey strongly suggests that the religious meaning of ἥρωες did not start to materialise before the last decades of the sixth century, as the combination of gods and heroes appears first in Heraclitus (B 5 DK),<sup>34</sup> and only then in several variations in fifth-century authors, such as Aeschylus (Ag. 516), Herodotus (2.45, 143, 8.109), Aristophanes (Av. 881, cf. Fraenkel on A. Ag. 516) and Thucydides (2.74.2, 4.87.2, 5.30.2);<sup>35</sup> it is only with Pindar (P. 11.7) and an Attic *lex sacra* of about 480-460 BC (IG I<sup>3</sup> 234.12) that we start to find a 'heroïne', and we have to wait until Herodotus (5.47.9 and 67.6, 6.69.15) before we start to find the term ἥρωες.<sup>36</sup> After the first decades of the fourth century the expression 'gods and heroes' became virtually *de rigueur* in Athens. It now not only appeared in authors like Xenophon and Plato,<sup>37</sup> but also in decrees of *genê*

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Bremer, *Greek Hymns*, 2 vols (Tübingen, 2001) I.369-72, II.373-77.

<sup>33</sup> There is no need, then, to emend the passage, as advocated by P. Maas, *Kleine Schriften* (Munich, 1973) 23.

<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately, we cannot establish the date of the Pythagorean opposition between gods and heroes in Diog. Laert. 8.33, which belongs to the Pythagorean *Memoirs*. It may well be older than the third-century BC date of that source.

<sup>35</sup> We find the combination of gods and heroes also in libations at symposia, where the first krater was for Zeus Olympios or Zeus and Hera, the second for the heroes and the third for Zeus Soter: Aeschylus F 55 Radt; Pollux 6.15; schol. on Pind. I. 6.10a.

<sup>36</sup> For *heroä* see now E. Kearns, 'Between God and Man: Status and Functions of Heroes and Their Sanctuaries', in *Le sanctuaire Grec = Entretiens Hardt* 37 (Geneva, 1992) 65-107; A. Pariente, 'Le monument argien des "Sept contre Thèbes"', in Piérart, *Polydipsion Argos*, 195-225 at 204-16; Boehringer, *Heroenkulte in Griechenland*, passim

<sup>37</sup> Xen. *Symp.* 8.28, *Cyr.* 2.1.1, 3.3.22, *Eq.* 11.8; Plato, *Ion* 531c8, *Resp.* 377e1, 378c5; Isocr. 14.60; Lyc. *Leoc.* 1.4; Dem. *Cor.* 184; Din. 1.64. Eduard Fraenkel (on A. Ag. 516) well quotes Karl Reinhardt (*Hermes* 77, 1942, 234): 'In contrast to the epic hero-less world there can be no consciousness or idea of the Polis without fellowship with the ἥρωες'.

and demes;<sup>38</sup> it was even retrojected into Draco.<sup>39</sup>

From our point of view, Pindar's *Second Olympian Ode* (2) of 476 BC is here of great interest, as the poet wonders: τίνα θεόν, τίν' ἥρωα, τίνα δ' ἄνδρα κελαδήσομεν;<sup>40</sup> Here we clearly find ἥρως in the religious sense as a being between gods and men,<sup>41</sup> and the same order of gods-heroes-men is also found in Antiphon (1.27), Isocrates (9.39), Antiphanes (F 204 KA) and Aristotle (*Mu.* 400b.22: gods-heroes-dead); the triangle man-hero-god even features in the new Posidippus in a poem on a statue of Philitas (63 AB), where Philitas represents man, the heroes the rejected artistic model and Ptolemy the god. The religious meaning of ἥρως is also attested in a few other passages of Pindar,<sup>42</sup> namely in his *Fifth Pythian Ode* (95: 462 BC), where Battos is called a ἥρως λαοσεβής, and in his *Paeon XIII* (52na.1 Maehler),<sup>43</sup> where we find the fragmentary combination ἥρωί τε βω[μὸν. The last passage is a valuable illustration of the fact that the distinction between a βωμός for the gods but an ἐσχάρα for the heroes, found

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<sup>38</sup> *Genê*: LSS 19.19 and 80 (Salaminiotai); IG<sup>2</sup> 1247.6 (Mesogeioi, if really a *genos*). Demes: IG<sup>2</sup> 1195.7; SEG 43 26 A 3-4.

<sup>39</sup> Draco apud Porph. *Abst.* 4.22 is accepted as authentic by Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 205 and *Kleine Schriften I*, 26, but G. Busolt and H. Swoboda, *Griechische Staatskunde II* (Munich, 1926) 814 n.2 already saw its Hellenistic origin; Ekroth, *Sacrificial Rituals*, 179 n. 212.

<sup>40</sup> As is well known, the question is imitated by Horace's *Quem virum* (*Od.* 1.12.1-3), see most recently A. Hardie, 'The Pindaric Sources of Horace Odes 1.12', *HSCP* 101 (2003) 371-404; Currie, *Pindar*, 217f.

<sup>41</sup> Compare the discussion of the status of the hero by J.-P. Vernant, *Mythe et société en Grèce ancienne* (Paris, 1974) 117f.

<sup>42</sup> Currie, *Pindar*, 61 unpersuasively also compares *P.* 8.27, *N.* 3.22. Fr. 133.5-6 Maehler seems to me a special case, which has to be looked at in its Orphic context, cf. *OF* 476.11 and *OF* 492.9 Bernabé.

<sup>43</sup> Note, however, that I. Rutherford, *Pindar's Paeans* (Oxford, 2001) 418-22 strongly doubts that the poem is a paean. For Battos see now Bremmer, 'Myth and History in the Foundation of Cyrene', in P. Azara *et al.* (eds), *Mites de fundació de ciutats al món antic (Mesopotàmia, Grècia I Roma)* (Barcelona, 2002) 155-63.

first in the late fourth-century Neanthes of Cyzicus (*FGrH* 84 F 7),<sup>44</sup> is a later systematisation that is not supported by the archaeological remains.<sup>45</sup>

Now how do we explain this development of a separate category of heroes? It seems to me that Burkert went into the right direction when he suggested that the rise of the hero cult should not be separated from a restructuring of spiritual life under the influence of Homer. As he formulates it: 'The gods are elevated as an exclusive group into an ideal Olympus; whatever is left behind is subsumed under the category of demigods'.<sup>46</sup> However, in his handbook the development is put too early.<sup>47</sup> Just as the first mention of gods and heroes together occurred only around 500 BC, the first mention of the group of twelve Olympian gods is not found before the last decades of the sixth century, the earliest being the Athenian altar of Pisistratus the Younger in 522/1 BC.<sup>48</sup> I conclude therefore that a hardening of the division between the main gods of the Greeks and all other (by lack of a better word!) supernatural beings worthy of worship took place in the course of the later sixth century BC. This

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<sup>44</sup> Neanthes' date has now moved back into the fourth century because of the more recent re-edition of Philodemus' 'Academicorum Index', cf. T. Dorandi, *Storia dei Filosofi* (Naples, 1991) col. II.38-9, III.35 and a scholion in margin of col. V (*FGrH* 84 F 23); W. Burkert, 'Philodems Arbeitstext zur Geschichte der Akademie', *ZPE* 97 (1993) 87-94 at 92.

<sup>45</sup> For a useful survey see F.T. van Straten, *Hiera kalá* (Leiden, 1995) 165-7; add now G. Ekroth, 'Altars on Attic Vases: the identification of *bomos* and *eschara*', in C. Scheffer (ed.), *Ceramics in Context* (Stockholm, 2001) 115-26 and the literature quoted in note 5.

<sup>46</sup> Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 205.

<sup>47</sup> Similarly, Parker *Athenian religion*, 39.

<sup>48</sup> Thuc. 6.54.6, cf. C.R. Long, *The Twelve Gods of Greece and Rome* (Leiden, 1987); S. Angiolillo, 'Hestia, l'edificio F e l'altare dei 12 Dei ad Atene', *Ostraka* 1 (1992) 171-6; R. Nünlist, *ZPE* 99 (1993) 250 (to swear 'by the twelve gods' is still customary in contemporary Greece); Parker, *Athenian Religion*, 73; S. Georgoudi, 'Les Douze dieux des Grecs: variations sur un thème', in eadem and J.-P. Vernant (eds), *Mythes grecs au figuré: de l'antiquité au baroque* (Paris, 1996) 43-80 and 'Les Douze Dieux et les autres dans l'espace

birth of the triangle gods-heroes-mortals may well have been connected to the widening of the gap between gods and mortals, which can also be observed in tragedy, where the tragedians were much less inclined to apply qualifications such as 'god-like' to their characters than Homer.<sup>49</sup>

Students of the rise of the hero cult often connected this development with the influence of epic poetry. However, the more recent discoveries of a large Protogeometric building at Lefkandi with 'a bronze cremation urn of a warrior, who was accompanied by an inhumed female and four sacrificed horses' and an important warrior's tomb at Eretria (ca. 720 BC) have given us previously unknown material to compare real high-status funerary ceremonial to the epic descriptions. They suggest that the 'heroic' burials known from archaeology and the funerary epic descriptions represent parallel traditions rather than one being the model for the other.<sup>50</sup>

Unfortunately, at present we do not seem to have enough evidence at our disposal to explain the rise of the hero cult *sensu stricto*. As Robert Parker has rightly observed, 'The more one considers the diversity of the political contexts in which hero-cults emerged up and down the Greek world in the eight (I would say: sixth) century, the harder it becomes to find a socio-political explanation of any simple type'.<sup>51</sup> Undoubtedly, epic poetry could have played some role in this process, as it would explain the continuity in *terminology* of ἥρωες;<sup>52</sup> another

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cultuel grec', *Kernos* 11 (1998) 73-83.

<sup>49</sup> As noted by Fraenkel on A. Ag. 1547; see also Friis Johansen and Whittle on A. *Supp.* 967.

<sup>50</sup> See now J.P. Crielaard, 'Past or Present? Epic Poetry, Aristocratic Self-representation and the Concept of Time in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries BC', in F. Montanari (ed.), *Omero tremila anni dopo* (Rome, 2002) 239-95 at 243-47.

<sup>51</sup> Parker, *Athenian Religion*, 39.

<sup>52</sup> An early example of this influence is perhaps the mid sixth-century inscription for the Seven against Thebes in Argos: SEG 42.274, cf. Pariente, 'Le monument argien';

possibility in this respect would be laments for the great warriors of the past.<sup>53</sup> However this may be, it should now be clear that the conceptualisation of the category ἥρωας materialised only in the later sixth century and should not be retrojected into earlier centuries. In that period we have tomb cults, cults of ancestors, and cults of founders of cities,<sup>54</sup> but it is only from the late Archaic Age onwards that we start to have hero cults in the technical sense of the word. Consequently, we should avoid speaking of hero cult in the earlier Archaic Age.

It is perhaps this late emergence of the category ἥρωας that explains the difficulty of modern scholars in finding a difference in the sacrificial rituals for heroes and those for gods. In fact, contemporary studies increasingly stress that there are no significant differences,<sup>55</sup> and it is really surprising how difficult it actually is to demonstrate that differences did exist.<sup>56</sup> As there was no independent authority to decide who belonged where, some heroes even stayed hovering on the edge of the divine. For example, it is remarkable how casually, as Thomas Harrison calls it, Herodotus appears to speak of Ajax as one of the gods.<sup>57</sup> Other famous and less famous heroes, such as Achilles,<sup>58</sup> Amphiaraus,<sup>59</sup>

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Hall, 'Beyond the Polis', 52-55.

<sup>53</sup> For these see R.L. Fowler, *The Nature of Early Greek Lyric: Three preliminary Studies* (Toronto, 1987) 88 note 8, overlooked by A. Aloni, 'The Proem of Simonides' Plataea Elegy and the Circumstances of Its Performance', in D. Sider and D. Boedeker (eds), *The New Simonides* (Baltimore and London, 2001) 86-105 at 90.

<sup>54</sup> Although these may be much later than is often thought, cf. C. Antonaccio, 'Colonization and the origins of hero cult', in Hägg, *Ancient Greek Hero Cult*, 109-21; add the observation of Parker, *Athenian Religion*, 137 note 56 that even in the case of oecists 'one can observe a tendency to avoid the word 'hero'.'

<sup>55</sup> A. Verbanck-Piérard, 'Héros attiques au jour le jour: les calendriers des demeures', in V. Pirenne-Delforge (ed.), *Les Panthéons des cités des origines à la Périégèse de Pausanias* (Liège, 1998) 109-27; Ekroth, *The Sacrificial Rituals of Greek Hero-Cults*; R. Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens* (Oxford, 2005) 446.

<sup>56</sup> See R. Parker, 'ὥς ἥρωι ἐναγίζειν', in Hägg, *Greek Sacrificial Ritual*, 37-45.

<sup>57</sup> Hdt. 8.121.1, cf. T. Harrison, *Divinity and History. The Religion of Herodotus* (Oxford,

Asclepius,<sup>60</sup> Diomedes,<sup>61</sup> Heracles,<sup>62</sup> and Lampsake,<sup>63</sup> also moved between the categories of gods and heroes. In this respect, real life was rather less tidy than scholars have long liked to believe.

## 2. Heroization and the New Simonides

Having looked at the rise of the hero cult in general, let us now take a brief look at a specific problem: were the fifth-century Greek war dead heroized and is the new Simonides on the battle of Plataea additional evidence for the practice, as Deborah Boedeker has recently argued?<sup>64</sup> Like her, I will first scrutinize the extra-literary evidence before turning to the text itself. It seems natural to look first at the evidence for the near-contemporary battles in the period of 490 until 479 BC, those at Marathon, Artemision, Thermopylae and Salamis. We are quite well informed about the treatment of the dead after those battles and in none of

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2002<sup>2</sup>) 159-63 with other interesting examples from Herodotus.

<sup>58</sup> For the cults of Achilles see most recently P.-J. Shaw, 'Lords of Hellas, Old Men of the Sea. The Occasion of Simonides' Elegy on Plataea', in Sider and Boedeker, *The New Simonides*, 164-81; A.S. Rusyaeva, 'The Temple of Achilles on the Island of Leuke in the Black Sea', *Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia* 9 (2003) 1-16.

<sup>59</sup> Paus. 1.34.2, cf. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cult*, 58-62; Kearns, 'Between God and Man', 71.

<sup>60</sup> See most recently J. Riethmuller, 'Bothros and tetrastyle: the *heroon* of Asclepius in Athens', in Hägg, *Ancient Greek Hero Cult*, 123-43.

<sup>61</sup> Farnell, *Greek Hero Cult*, 290-1; SEG 48.692-4.

<sup>62</sup> Ekroth, 'Pausanias', 156 note 40 with the most recent bibliography; add now E.J. Stafford, 'Héraklès: encore et toujours le problème du *heros-theos*', *Kernos* 18 (2005) 391-406; C. Calame, 'Heracles, animal and sacrificial victim in Sophocles' Trachiniae?', in Hägg, *Greek Sacrificial Ritual*, 181-95.

<sup>63</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 255, cf. C. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Hylas, the Nymphs, Dionysos and Others* (Stockholm, 2005) 331f.

<sup>64</sup> D. Boedeker, 'Paths to Heroization at Plataea', in Sider and Boedeker, *The New Simonides*, 149-63.

them is there any indication that they received special cultic honours.<sup>65</sup> Admittedly, we do hear of such honours for the fallen at Marathon – but not before the late second century BC.<sup>66</sup> It is typical of Currie, who is very keen on early heroization, that he recognises the lack of evidence, but still claims: ‘there remains a fair probability that they were heroized shortly after the battle. There is an *a fortiori* argument to this effect: the Marathon dead were the Athenian war dead *par excellence*, and if the Athenians heroized any war dead in the fifth and sixth centuries BC (...), we would expect them to have heroized these’.<sup>67</sup> Admittedly, the fallen warriors received a special burial that made them look like the heroes of epic, but they did not receive cultic honours.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, despite Currie’s claim, a more distanced view has to observe that Marathon acquired its pre-eminent position in Athenian cultural memory only gradually in the course of the fifth century: neither Pindar nor Simonides nor Aeschylus in his *Persae* mention Marathon.<sup>69</sup>

The situation seems to be different at Plataea, even though the regularly adduced mention of Plataean gods and heroes in Isocrates (14.60) is no more than a standard rhetorical topos (above). However, Thucydides’ description (3.58.4) of the Plataeans pleading for their lives in 427 must carry more weight. According to him, they pointed to the tombs of the Spartans fallen at Plataea and argued

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<sup>65</sup> See the survey in W.K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War* IV (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1985) 166-74.

<sup>66</sup> IG II<sup>2</sup> 1006 (123/2 BC); Paus. 1.32.4; Heliod. 1.17.5, cf. Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens*, 470.

<sup>67</sup> Currie, *Pindar*, 90.

<sup>68</sup> See the subtle discussion by J. Whitley, ‘The Monuments that Stood before Marathon: Tomb Cult and Hero Cult in Archaic Attica’, *AJA* 98 (1994) 213-30.

<sup>69</sup> See the interesting study of K. Hölkeskamp, ‘Marathon – vom Monument zum Mythos’, in D. Papenfuss and M. Stroocka (eds), *Gab es das griechische Wunder* (Mainz, 2001) 329-53.

that they 'honoured (ἐτιμῶμεν) them every year at the public expense with garments and the other customary gifts, as much fruits of the season as our land produced, bringing to them the first fruits of everything'. Virtually everybody seems to read Thucydides as an ethnographic reporter about local hero worship instead of a highly sophisticated piece of narrative composed by an, in this case, armchair anthropologist. This approach is probably wrong, since the passage is more problematic than is usually realized.

To start with, Herodotus (9.85.1-3) was clearly well informed about the graves of Plataea, but he does not mention any honour for the fallen at his time. An *argumentum ex silentio* is of course not decisive, but it should make us think before accepting all too quickly later evidence. Much more problematic is the Plataeans' suggestion that they concentrated on the Spartans with their honours. According to Herodotus, the Spartans had three tombs (of priests,<sup>70</sup> the rest of the Spartans and the helots), and it is hardly credible that the Plataeans would have concentrated on the Spartans alone or on them more than on the others. Moreover, the nature of the sacrifice mentioned is completely unique. Neither the commentaries (Steup, Gomme, Hornblower) nor recent studies of hero rituals (Hägg, Ekroth: note 5) provide a single good parallel for Thucydides' description. Consequently, he may well have made up this description from a combination of gifts to the dead, as in the case of Sophocles' *Electra* (452), and the Athenian first fruit decree of the late 420s, which clearly was an expression of Athenian hegemony.<sup>71</sup> Finally, other notices, such as the Eleutheria festival at

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<sup>70</sup> For this much discussed passage see most recently D. Gilula, 'Who Was Actually Buried in the First of the Three Spartan Graves (Hdt. 9.85.1)? Textual and Historical Problems', in P. Derow and R. Parker (eds), *Herodotus and His World* (Oxford, 2003) 73-87 at 81-85.

<sup>71</sup> For the decree see now Parker, *Athenian Religion*, 143f.



Plataea as described in Plutarch's *Life of Aristides* (21), are clearly post-classical.<sup>72</sup> Curiously, both Gomme and Hornblower refer to Plutarch's passage in their commentary on Th. 2.71.1, but they do not point out that Thucydides locates King Pausanias' sacrifice to Zeus Eleutherios at Plataea's agora, whereas the traveller Pausanias (9.2.4) locates the sacrifice outside the city. Moreover, the latter's eye-witness description of the tombs is at variance with Herodotus' description based on informants. It looks very much as if not only the festival but also the tombs had been reconstructed in the course of time. In short, it is not necessary to interpret the description by Thucydides as a hero cult, which would be exceptional, and a healthy scepticism seems preferable.

Admittedly, in a highly influential study Nicole Loraux (1943-2003) stated that the Athenians did heroize their war dead in the fifth century.<sup>73</sup> To reach that conclusion, she had to argue that in his report of Pericles' famous speech Thucydides suppressed all mention of that cult. However, she was unable to adduce a single explicit testimony for a fifth-century hero cult for the war-dead.<sup>74</sup> It is true that we now have three bronze vessels from the period 480-440 with the inscription 'The Athenians [gave as] prizes in honour of those who died in war',<sup>75</sup> but nothing suggests that these were prizes of games for heroized dead

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<sup>72</sup> SEG 37.65, 20-4; Strabo 9.2.31; Paus. 9.2.5-6; Philostratus, *Gymn.* 8, , cf. A. Schachter, *Cults of Boiotia* 3 (London, 1994) 125-43; Parker, *Athenian Religion*, 137 n. 57; G. Thériault, *Le culte d'Homonoia dans les cités grecques* (Lyon and Quebec, 1996) 112-30; Currie, *Pindar*, 92; O. van Nijf, 'Aristos Hellenôn: succès sportif et identité grecque dans la Grèce romaine', *Mètis* NS 3 (2005) 271-94 at 273-77.

<sup>73</sup> N. Loraux, *L'invention d'Athènes* (Paris, 1981) 39-42.

<sup>74</sup> In addition to Th. 3.58.4, Loraux cites as evidence for the fifth century only Th. 2.35.1 and 44.1, where heroic worship is not thematised at all and τιμή clearly means the honours for the dead, as is normal in tragedy, cf. J. Mikalson, *Honor Thy Gods* (Chapel Hill and London, 1991) 193 (with many passages). For τιμᾶν in heroic sacrifices see Ekroth, *Sacrificial Rituals*, 199-206.

<sup>75</sup> IG I<sup>3</sup> 523-5, cf. Parker, *Athenian Religion*, 132 note 36. A connection of these vessels

rather than for funeral games.

The two explicit testimonies we have about the after-death fate of the war-dead even seem to contradict a heroization. According to Stesimbrotos (*FGrH* 107 F 9), Pericles argued that those fallen at Samos in 440/339 'had become immortal like the gods. For even the gods we do not actually see, but we infer that they are immortal from the honours they receive and the benefits they confer. But just these things are true of those who have died for their country' (tr. Robert Parker). However we may interpret these somewhat enigmatic, hyperbolic words, they point to a divinisation rather than to a heroization. Similarly, when on an official war monument of *ca.* 432 BC the souls of fallen Athenians are said to have been received by the αἰθήρ, 'the upper air', but their bodies by the earth, it is hard to think of a heroization. Euripides picked up the idea and applied it to war heroes in his *Suppliants* (533-4) of the late 420s.<sup>76</sup> No suggestion there of heroization either. In short, unlike Boedeker,<sup>77</sup> I agree with Robert Parker that there is no evidence that the Athenians heroized their war-dead. As he notes, 'What could be readily done, of course, was to pay the war-dead honours indistinguishable from those of heroes, since no sharp divide separated funerary from heroic cult. They might then grow fully into the heroic mould; and later ages at a greater cultural remove duly applied the term 'hero' to the dead of the Persian wars'. The Classical Athenians, then, 'heroized their benefactors as best they could',<sup>78</sup> but they did not take the final step of an official heroization of the war-dead.

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with the Plataean Eleutheria, as postulated by Boedeker (151) and others, is not based on any evidence.

<sup>76</sup> *IG* I<sup>3</sup> 1179.6-7. For the immediate popularity of the idea see also *Erechth.* F 370.71-2 Kannicht, *Hel.* 1013-6, *Or.* 1086-7, F 839.8-14, 908b, 971 Kannicht; Bremmer, *The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife* (London and New York, 2002) 7; W. Burkert, *Babylon, Memphis, Persepolis* (Cambridge Mass. and London, 2004) 110-12.

<sup>77</sup> Boedeker, 'Paths', 150-3.

But does the New Simonides perhaps, as Boedeker claims, ‘offer further evidence as to how the (implicit) heroization of contemporaries en masse was facilitated or justified’?<sup>79</sup> We will pass over the word ‘implicit’, as she does not explain what that would mean in this connection, and move straight to the text. There is in general a consensus that in the proem Simonides briefly describes Achilles’ death. The mention of both Apollo’s hand (8) and Paris (11) strongly suggests that he followed the traditional epic version, since both the *Iliad* (XXII.359) and Proclus’ summary of the *Aethiopis* specify that Achilles was killed by Paris and Apollo. An Attic pelike of the Niobe painter (about 460 BC) shows that the god was supposed to have directed the fatal arrow to Achilles’ heel;<sup>80</sup> similarly, Athena directed Diomedes’ spear when he aimed at Pandarus (V.290).

After the Greeks had destroyed Troy in revenge for the death of Achilles, they returned home having acquired ἀθά]νατον κλέος (15). The expression is an innovation of the combination κλέος ἄφθιτον, as Boedeker (155) rightly observes. It may be added that the combination had just been introduced by Bacchylides (13.32) only a few years before Simonides, who probably used it also later in his elegy (28).<sup>81</sup> Boedeker (155) adds that ‘the Danaans have become not only famous but deathless, and the speaker hopes that the Plataiomachoi too will share his fate’. This is true, but surely in a metaphorical sense only, as in Tyrtaeus’ famous Spartan elegy (12.31-2 W<sup>2</sup>):

οὐδέ ποτε κλέος ἐσθλὸν ἀπόλλυται οὐδ’ ὄνομ’ αὐτοῦ,  
ἀλλ’ ὑπὸ γῆς περ ἐὼν γίνεται ἀθάνατος

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<sup>78</sup> Parker, *Athenian Religion*, 137.

<sup>79</sup> Boedeker, ‘Paths’, 153.

<sup>80</sup> See *LIMC* I.1 (1981) 183, no. 851.

<sup>81</sup> The expression is rather rare in Greek literature. It occurs only in Plato, *Symp.* 209D; Dem. 22.27, 24.85.

The stanza to which these lines belong (31-4) has long been suspected and almost certainly belongs to the later fifth century.<sup>82</sup> These lines, then, may have been inspired by Simonides rather than that he followed Tyrtaeus.<sup>83</sup> Yet, with their combination of glory and name, these lines are perhaps also helpful to understand lines 17 and 18 of Simonides, where Homer is said to have made the race of heroes famous to later generations:

] θείην καὶ ἐπώνυμον ὅπ[λοτέρ]οισιν  
 ἡμ]ιθέων ὠκύμορον γενεή[ν]

In line 17 ἐπώνυμος can mean hardly anything else but ‘famous’, as Lloyd-Jones saw,<sup>84</sup> but Simonides’ contemporaries must have also heard a connection with the meaning ‘name’, as ‘given as significant name, rightly named’ is its normal meaning. ‘Οπλότεροι is usually translated or interpreted as ‘later men’ or ‘future generations’.<sup>85</sup> Yet the semantic innovation away from the meaning ‘youngest son or daughter’, which the word always has in Homer and the *Homeric Hymns*, was already started by the author of the *Epigoni* (F 1 Bernabé/Davies) by beginning his poem with: νῦν αὖθ' ὀπλοτέρων ἀνδρῶν ἀρχώμεθα, Μοῦσαι, as Walter Burkert has recently argued.<sup>86</sup> And just as the *Epigoni* were the

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<sup>82</sup> This has been overlooked by Currie, *Pindar*, 96-8, but see now, with the bibliography, C. Faraone, ‘Stanzaic Structure and Responion in the Elegiac Poetry of Tyrtaeus’, *Mnemosyne* IV 59 (2006) 19-52 at 43f.

<sup>83</sup> *Contra* E. Stehle, ‘A Bard of the Iron Age and His Auxiliary Muse’, in Sider and Boedeker, *The New Simonides*, 106-19 at 116f

<sup>84</sup> H. Lloyd-Jones, ‘Notes on the New Simonides’, *ZPE* 101 (1994) 1-3 at 2.

<sup>85</sup> See, e.g., D. Sider and I. Rutherford, in Sider and Boedeker, *The New Simonides*, 20 and 44, respectively; S. Slings, ‘De nieuwe Simonides’, *Lampas* 36 (2003) 243-60 at 254 ‘jongere, latere generatie’.

<sup>86</sup> W. Burkert, ‘Die Waffen und die Jungen: Homerisch »hoploteroi«’, in M. Reichel and A. Rengakos (eds), *Epea pteroenta. Beiträge zur Homerforschung. Festschrift für Wolfgang Kullmann zum 75. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart, 2002) 31-34, who does not refer to Simonides’

successors of the Seven, so the expression, to some extent, suggests that the Greeks at Plataea are the immediate successors to the Greeks at Troy, perhaps even nearly their younger brothers.<sup>87</sup>

In line 18 the choice of the designation ἡμίθεοι for the heroes of Troy has rightly drawn attention. Jenny Strauss-Clay has observed that Simonides uses the word also in his *Dirges* (523 PMG):<sup>88</sup>

οὐδὲ γὰρ οἱ πρότερόν ποτ' ἐπέλοντο,  
θεῶν δ' ἐξ ἀνάκτων ἐγένονθ' υἱες ἡμίθεοι,  
ἄπονον οὐδ' ἄφθιτον οὐδ' ἀκίνδυνον βίον  
ἐς γῆρας ἐξίκοντο τελέσαντες

for not even those who lived in olden days  
demi-gods, sons born from the gods, our lords  
arrived at old age having completed  
a life without toil, decline and danger.

The passage is interesting, as the employment of ἡμίθεοι in this dirge can show us something of its semantic development. The term occurs first in a remarkable passage in *Iliad* XII (10-23), where the poet pulls back from his actual narrative and relates how after the destruction of Troy Apollo and Poseidon flushed away the wall of the Greek army camp where 'the race of the semi-divine men had fallen in the dust' (23). In other words, 'semi-divine' here applied to the war-dead of the Greeks and Trojans seen from a later perspective. Given the many deaths of even the most illustrious warriors on both sides in the *Iliad*, it is not surprising that Hesiod applied the word to the fourth race in his *Works and Days* (159-60):

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poem.

<sup>87</sup> Thus Slings, 'De nieuwe Simonides', 254.

<sup>88</sup> J. Strauss Clay, 'The New Simonides and Homer's *Hemitheoi*', in Sider and Boedeker, *The New Simonides*, 182-84.

ἀνδρῶν ἡρώων θεῖον γένος, οἱ καλέονται  
ἡμίθεοι, προτέρη γενεή κατ' ἀπείρονα γαῖαν

the divine race of heroic men, the so-called  
demi-gods, the race before ours on the immense earth.

In his commentary, Verdenius notes that 'the phrase (οἱ καλέονται) does not imply that they were already known under this name, for it is Hes(iod) who gives them the name'.<sup>89</sup>

Like Homer, Hesiod seems to have introduced a semantic innovation, since ἡμίθεοι is a normal designation of the older mythological generation, and that is probably why it occurs only in the plural.<sup>90</sup> In Callinus (1.19 W<sup>2</sup>), but also in Alcman (F 3.7 Calame = 1.7 Davies), Alcaeus (F 42.13 Voigt), Pseudo-Hesiod's *Catalogue* (F 204.100 MW),<sup>91</sup> Ibycus (S176.1 Davies), Bacchylides (9.10, 11.62, 13.155, F 20b.31 Maehler) and Pindar (P. 4.12, 184, 211), ἡμίθεοι can be applied to the previous generation of the great mythological heroes (Callinus, presumably; Simonides) or, more specifically, to the warriors before Troy (Alcaeus; the *Catalogue of Women*; Bacchylides; Euripides' *Iphigeneia in Aulis* [172-3], etc.), the Seven against Thebes (Bacchylides), heroes during funerary games (Ibycus), the Argonauts (Pindar, but perhaps already in Akousilaos *FGrH* 2 F 30 = 30 Fowler) and less significant individual heroes, like one of the Hippocoontids (Alcman);

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<sup>89</sup> W.J. Verdenius, *A Commentary on Hesiod Works and Days*, vv. 1-382 (Leiden, 1985) 93.

<sup>90</sup> Van Wees, 'From Kings to Demigods', 364.

<sup>91</sup> For the text see now L. Koenen, 'Greece, the Near East, and Egypt: Cyclic Destruction in Hesiod and the Catalogue of Women', *TAPA* 124 (1994) 1-34 at 26-34. For the date (ca. 580 BC) see Bremmer, 'Myth as Propaganda: Athens and Sparta', *ZPE* 117 (1997) 9-17 at 11; R.L. Fowler, 'Genealogical Thinking, Hesiod's Catalogue, and the Creation of the Hellenes', *PCPhS* 44 (1998) 1-19 at 1 note 4.

there are even heroines called Hemithea.<sup>92</sup> In none of these early examples we find any thematisation that a ἡμίθεος is literally the offspring from a god and a mortal, and the meaning ‘intermediate category between gods and mortals’ is not found before Isocrates (3.42, 9.39). These observations support Verdenius’ suggestion that originally ἡμίθεος does not so much mean literally ‘semi-divine’, which does not apply to many of the Homeric warriors, but rather ‘almost divine’, just as ἡμιθνής means ‘almost dead’.<sup>93</sup>

Boedeker rightly attaches much weight to the expression χαῖρε in line 19, which is addressed to Achilles, but she wants to have her cake and eat it. On the one hand, she quotes Dirk Obbink’s observation that the formula χαῖρε ... αὐτὰρ ἐγώ ‘marks the transition from hymn to epic or from proemium to *nomos* within a poetic performance. In the Plataea elegy, correspondingly, the formula marks the change in focus from the Old Trojan War heroes to the recent battle against Persians’.<sup>94</sup> On the other hand, she also quotes Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood’s observation that ‘before the fourth century χαῖρε or χαίρετε is not used as a form of address to the ordinary dead, but is restricted to the living and occasionally applied to heroized or divinized dead, by analogy with salutation to gods and heroes’.<sup>95</sup> Now it is hard to imagine that χαῖρε was used to signal both the transition from hymn to epic or narrative and the heroization of the fallen Greek. The context, surely, totally favours Obbink’s interpretation here. Moreover, Boedeker overlooked the chronological aspects of Sourvinou-Inwood’s

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<sup>92</sup> Hecataeus *FGrH* 1 F 139; Diod Sic. 5.62.1-63.3, see most recently Sourvinou-Inwood, *Hylas*, 332-3.

<sup>93</sup> Verdenius, *A Commentary*, 99. During the discussion in Paris, Jean Lallot also compared ἡμίονος.

<sup>94</sup> Boedeker, ‘Paths’, 157, quoting D. Obbink, ‘The Genre of Plataea. Generic Unity in the New Simonides’, in Sider and Boedeker, *The New Simonides*, 65-85 at 69-73.

<sup>95</sup> Boedeker, ‘Paths’, 158, referring to C. Sourvinou-Inwood, ‘Reading’ Greek Death

observation, whose examples start only later in the fifth century.<sup>96</sup> The earliest example is Euripides' *Alcestis* (995-1005) of 438 BC in the lines that we already have mentioned. Subsequently, we find this usage in the *Orestes* (1673-4), *Hippolytus* (1437), *Erechtheus* (F 362.33 Kannicht) and *Heraclids* (600-1). This relatively late usage also causes us to reconsider the date for the well-known epigram attributed to Simonides (*AP* 7.254 = *Ep.* XLIX Page = *IG* I<sup>3</sup> 1181), which was also partially found on a marble fragment in Athens in the nineteenth century and starts as follows:

χαίρετ' ἀριστῆες πολέμου μέγα κῦδος ἔχοντες  
 κοῦροι Ἀθηναίων ἔξοχοι ἵπποσύναι

From Adolf Wilhelm (1864-1950) onwards, the date of this epigram has been much discussed. Although initially his dating to 458/7 in memory of the battle of Tanagra was accepted, there always were dissenting voices,<sup>97</sup> and who follows the discussions over the last thirty years in *SEG*,<sup>98</sup> will notice that gradually opinions have shifted to agnosticism or a later date. David Lewis (1928-1994) opted for a date after the middle of the fifth century (*ad* *IG* I<sup>3</sup> 1181), and the latest study even assigns the inscription to the later 430s or earlier 420s.<sup>99</sup> In this way the literary and epigraphical evidence for the usage nicely converge.

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(Oxford, 1995) 180-216.

<sup>96</sup> For the early history of χαῖρε see R. Wachter, 'Griechisch χαῖρε: Vorgeschichte eines Grusswortes', *MH* 55 (1998) 65-75; J.F. García, 'Symbolic Action in the Homeric Hymns: The Theme of Recognition', *ClAnt* 21 (2002) 5-39 at 29-34; R. Wachter, 'Χαῖρε καὶ πῖε εἰ', in J. Penney (ed.), *Indo-European Perspectives. Studies in Honour of Anna Morpurgo Davies* (Oxford, 2004) 300-22.

<sup>97</sup> For the earlier literature see Pritchett, *Greek State at War* IV, 180f.

<sup>98</sup> See *SEG* 29.60; 31.48; 33.36; 46.72.

© S. Cataldi, 'I rapporti politici di Segesta e Alicie con Atene nel V secolo a. C.', in *Seconde Giornate Internazionali di Studi sull'Area Elima* (Pisa, 1997) 303-356 at 321 (= *SEG* 48.55).



When we now try to sum up our discussion we can see that there is no clear evidence that the war-dead of Plataea received a hero cult or that Simonides even hinted at such a cult. His immortality is still the immortality bestowed by the poet. The connection between epic heroes and warriors was of course close and many cultic heroes were represented as warriors,<sup>100</sup> but it would need the carnage and ferocity of the Peloponnesian War before we start to find the first traces of the heroization of fallen and, perhaps, living warriors.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Ar. F 240 KA; G. Salapata, 'Hero warriors from Corinth and Lakonia', *Hesperia* 66 (1997) 245-60.

<sup>101</sup> For the cults of Brasidas and Hagnon in Amphipolis see now Hornblower on Thuc. 5.11.1.